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British home vs. Russian home

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Introduction

Housing generally refers to the social problem of ensuring that members of society have a home in which to live, whether this is a house, or some other kind of dwelling, lodging, or shelter.

There are 22 million homes in Britain — big homes and small homes, old cottages and new buildings, houses and flats. Almost everybody in Britain dream s of living in a detached house. Two third of the families in Britain own their houses. Millions of these houses are the same with two or three bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs, dining-room and kitchen downstairs.

There are a great many different kinds of homes in Britain. In this article we can consider housing in Britain and compare it with Russian features.

# Housing in Britain

## Houses or flats?

Almost everybody in Britain dream s of living in a detached house; that is, a house which is a separate building. More people are buying their own homes than in the past. About two thirds of the people in England and the rest of Britain either own, or are in the process of buying, their own home. Most others live in houses or flats that they rent from a private landlord, the local council, or housing association.



A typical British town view

The property is also a status symbol. At the extreme end of the scale there is the aristocratic 'stately home' set in acres of garden. Of course, such a house is an unrealistic dream for most people. Most people try to avoid living in blocks of flats. With a few exceptions, mostly in certain locations in central London, flats are the cheapest kind of home. British people think that people who live in them are those who can’t afford to live anywhere else.

British people don’t like flats, they prefer old cottages. Only one in four consumers would choose a home built in the last 10 years. At past millions of poorer people lived in old, cold, uncomfortable houses, often with only an outside toilet and no bathroom because of their distaste of flats. During the next years many of them were given smart new blocks of flats to live. They were much more comfortable but people hated their new homes. They said they felt cut off from the world and missed their old houses.

## Types of British houses

England has many types of homes. In the large cities, people often live in apartments, which are called flats. In most towns, there are streets of houses joined together in long rows. They are called terraced houses.

Most houses in England are made of stone or brick from the local area where the houses are built. The colors of the stones and bricks vary across the country.

The main types of houses in England are:

1. Detached: it is a house which is not joined to another house. **A detached house is a stand-alone residential structure that does not share outside walls with another house or building.** Also called a separate house or a single-detached dwelling, a detached house is typically the most desirable single-family unit.



Detached house

1. Semi-detached: A semi-detached house (often abbreviated to semi ) is a single family dwelling house built as one of a pair that share one common [wall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Party_wall). Often, each house's layout is a mirror image of the other. Semi-detached houses are the most common property type in the UK.



Semi-detached house

1. Terraced: it is a house which is part of a line of houses. It is a house which is joined to other houses on two sides; several houses joined together.



Terraced house

1. Flats: part of a bigger building where all the flats share a front door; they are called “apartments” in American English



House with flats

1. Bungalow: it is a house which is only on one floor, no stairs. It may be joined to another bungalow or might stand alone.



Bungalow

The most popular type of house in England is semi-detached (more than 27% of all homes), closely followed by detached then terraced. Almost half of London's households are flats or apartments. Detached houses are too expensive for most people.

## Owning and renting

It is undoubtedly ingrained in the British psyche that buying your own home is a life goal. Of all the property in the UK, 63% is owner-occupied.

For while buying a home is a dream for the majority of Britain people — and will likely leave them better off in the long run — it isn’t necessarily the best option for everyone. Buy a home and there’s far more than just your mortgage repayments to think about. There is boiler issues, repair bills, general maintenance, buildings insurance — the list can be long and expensive. In many towns and cities, especially around London, property prices are extremely high – for most people too high to even consider anything but renting.

With more and more people choosing to rent, canny landlords are growing wise to the increasing demand, and rental prices are rising steadily. Mortgage regulation and rising house prices have combined to make home ownership more difficult to access. But money isn’t the only reason people choose to rent rather than buy: 24% of tenants rent because it is less hassle and they like the flexibility. Another benefit of renting is you don’t have to cough up if things go wrong with the property. If the boiler breaks down, or if the roof needs repairing, all a tenant needs to do is to call their landlord who has the responsibility to arrange and pay for repairs. So, surely, in the longer term renting is cheaper too. After all, tenants only have to hand over rent, whereas home owners are faced with a whole host of monthly costs.

## Homelessness

Homelessness in the United Kingdom is kept somewhat at bay by a reasonable volume of housing, statutory rights, and various government initiatives. The longer term causes of homelessness have been examined by a number of research studies.

A number of different pathways into homelessness have been identified;research suggests that both personal factors and structural factors are ultimately responsible for the sequence of events that results in homelessness. For young people, there are additional factors that appear to be involved, most notably needing to face the responsibilities of independent living before they are ready for them.



Homelessness

All local authorities in the UK have a legal duty to provide 24-hour advice to homeless people, or those who are at risk of becoming homeless within 28 days. Once an individual applies to a local authority for assistance, from a person claiming to be homeless (or threatened with homelessness), the local authority is also duty bound to make inquiries into that person's circumstances, in order to decide whether they suffer statutory homelessness. For people meeting such criteria, the authority has a legal duty to find accommodation for the person, and provide them with assistance.

# Housing in Russia

## Russian cities

Most Russians (74%) live in the cities. Often historical center of the city is beautiful, and its “sleeping districts” are rather dull. The city always needed more residential housing, so the approach to construction outside the city center was mostly functional. Buildings that could fit as many inhabitants as possible, standing close to each other plus a basic infrastructure such as a kindergarten, a school, a medical clinic, a couple of stores, a playground for kids and maybe a park. Living closer to the center is convenient, since that way you lose less time for commuting? its prestigious, but the poor quality of air, the traffic situation, exorbitant prices and the prevalence of commercial buildings make a lot of streets a questionable win. Also its too expensive for a simple Russian family to buy or even rent a flat in the center.



Sleeping district

In the center you can see some historical sights and some elite houses that are owned to rich persons. In the sleeping district you can see different types of houses: from old soviet houses to new residential buildings, which have indoor parking, gyms, private security and other benefits.

## Types of Russian houses

Owning a private detached Russian house in a city is a very rare thing. Most people live in apartments (flats).

1. **City Apartment**

Some people live in apartments (flats) which were built between 1953-1964 when Nikita Khrushchev was the First Secretary of the Communist Party. Such a building is called a “Khrushchevka” and it looks like such houses are made of separate blocks, and in general they are very ramshackle and old.  There is usually a playground or in some cases a kindergarten in the area between buildings, in the central courtyard. Heating, electricity and water are provided by the government for separate fees.



Khrushchevka

After the beginning of a Russian housing construction boom in the last decade, many new, modern and beautiful apartments were built and sold to people. However, the international crisis has interrupted the development of Russian housing. More modern residential housing may have up to 21 floors, but they are built of panels. Apartments in such houses are bigger and may have a better plan, but in general they are not that much different from the earlier versions. People strongly prefer to live in brick houses or houses built under the more modern technology, called “monolith” (when the skeleton of the house is filled with concrete).

1. Communal apartments

The immediate response on the part of the Soviet government was to requisition houses and capacious apartments of the aristocrats and the wealthy bourgeoisie and divide them into communal flats (kommunalki).

A **communal,** or rather **shared apartment** is the type of an apartment where several people or even families can live together sharing the same kitchen and bathroom. Usually this is how such a shared apartment looks: there is a long hall in the middle of the apartment; one door of the hall leads to the shared kitchen, and another door leads to the shared bathroom; other doors of the shared apartment lead to the separate or adjoining rooms that can belong to one person or a whole family.



Communal apartments

1. Country House

Families in Russian villages, small towns and other countryside have their own houses. Russian housing in the countryside is pretty down in price compared to apartments and houses in the city. Until recently such houses had their own independent heating systems and wells. These houses come with a large piece of land which is enough for a Russian family to grow plants and provide themselves with food. Some country houses also have a small summer kitchen which is usually detached from the house and is used in summer. An important role in a Russian household belongs to the banya – Russian sauna, where a Russian family takes steam baths and washes.



Country house

1. Dacha

Since owning a house with a garden is something practically impossible for Russian city dwellers, the majority of Russian population has dacha in Russia. A dacha is a small country house with some piece of land for a kitchen garden. A dacha is much smaller than a country house and it is located in close proximity to the city.



Dacha

Dachas are usually abandoned in winter time. Since buying fruit and vegetables can be rather expensive in the city, especially in winter, having a dacha where a large family can grow all kinds of provision is very helpful. Many teenagers and young people spend their summer holidays or vacations in dacha villages.

## Owning and renting

To have an apartment in the capital is a dream of most residents of Russia. Very few are lucky enough to have an apartment in ownership, many take super overpriced mortgage to own a place once they pay back in 20-30 years. For the rest it is a dream that may never come true.

As in Britain people have to wait until they save enough money to buy the apartment and that is really difficult. There are two options: to buy an old apartment or buy an apartment in a new building. What is different from Britain: if you buy an apartment in the new building, the apartment will have only grey concrete walls. Most people should let their own team of construction workers install all the wires, smooth the concrete walls, do the concrete floors and later do all the renovation. Most people rent apartments and prices vary by the city and the district within the city. Renting apartments is not a good business since there are no laws, that protect a landlord from tenants destroying the apartment and there are no fixed leases.

## Homelessness

Russia’s transition to a market economy has exacerbated many Soviet-era social problems. The country’s homeless population, both children and adults, has increased dramatically in the past five years. Out of a total population of 147.2 million, Russia’s homeless now number no fewer than 1.5 million, a figure that excludes the country’s several million refugees and forced migrants. Neither the Russian state nor the public has the necessary finances and will to tackle the problem.

The state is obliged to give permanent shelter for free to anybody who needs better living conditions or has no permanent registration, because the right to shelter is still included in the constitution. This may take many years, though. Nobody still has the right to strip a person of permanent residency without their will, even the owner of the apartment. This creates problems for banks because mortgage loans became increasingly popular. Banks are obliged to provide a new, cheaper flat for a person instead of the old one if the person fails to repay the loan, or wait until all people who live in the flat are dead.

# Conclusion

In the living standards of the British and Russian you can see huge differences. Despite the fact that the owning of houses is difficult in both countries, in Russia, due to the low standard of living, even ordinary rent is sometimes impossible.

The British consider the goal of their lives to have their own separate house, and this goal cannot be simple. They are quite ready to purchase apartments and houses of lower class, and this already speaks about a higher standard of living of the country.

In Russia, on the contrary, the acquisition of any of your own housing, even parts of the living space is an impossible task. Those who already have a living space, usually get it by inheritance, and it will continue to be passed from generation to generation because of the high value of real estate.

Despite the huge differences in life and culture, two natives unite one thing: every person in his life faces the adoption of independent decisions and the difficulties of the housing issue. And there is one very important and pleasant similarity: for both Russians and British, their home is their fortress.

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